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HOW CALIFORNIA ESCAPED STATE DIVISION

By J. M. Guinn

The antagonism between Northern and Southern California, which still to a limited extent exists and which in times past has culminated in attempts to divide the state and from the parts form new commonwealths, ante-dates the American occupation many years.

Away back in the first quarter of the last century Echandia, who was governor of Las Californias, made San Diego his official residence. The politicians of Monterey were greatly offended. They demanded that the governor should reside at Monterey, the capital; but Echandia who was somewhat of an invalid preferred the gentle sea breezes and the genial sunshine of San Diego to the fogs and north winds of Monterey. When Victoria, the successor of Echandia, was overthrown at the battle of Lomitas by the soldiers of San Diego and Los Angeles and compelled to abdicate, Echandia again became governor.

He established the seat of his government at San Diego. The rebellious arribanos (uppers) of the north induced Agustin V. Zamarano, Victoria's Secretary of State, to raise the standard of revolt and make Monterey his capital. Each governor marshaled his adherents in battle array, but finally compromised by dividing California into two territories. The northern limit of Echandia's dominions was San Gabriel Mission, and the southern boundary of Zamorano's jurisdiction was the Mission of San Fernando. Between the borders was a strip of neutral ground—a no man's land—across which the respective armies of the frontier could defy their opponents and threaten to do things to them if they dared to cross the line. There is no record that the defies were heeded. No David and Goliath championing the respective sides settled the contest with sling shots.

Governor Figueroa united the divided territory, made Monterey his official residence, and for a time peace reigned, but the end of the controversy was not yet—the politicians of the south were placid, but they were plotting.

In 1835, Jose Antonio Carrillo, the Machievali of California history, secured the passing of a decree by the Mexican Con-

gress raising Los Angeles to the dignity of a city and making it the capital of the two Californias. The denizens of Angeles sent a demand to Monterey for the archives and a request that the governor remove to the capital. The politicians of the old capital were complaisant. They would obey the orders of the supreme government, but first Los Angeles must provide a suitable "palacio" for the government and they sent committees down to find one. Search as they might, never a suitable house could they find. Then to add insult to injury, they exasperated the dwellers in the Angel City by invidious comparisons—taunted them with lack of polish, twitted them on their provincialisms and sneered at their poverty.

Then came the Revolution of 1836, when Alvarado and Castro drove out the Mexican-born Governor Gutierrez and set up a government with the taking title—El Estado Libre de Alta California—The Free State of Alta California—a state that was to be independent of the supreme government and whose affairs should be administered by the *hijos del pais*—the native sons.

In the attempt to make California independent the people of Angeles discerned a scheme to defraud them of the capital. They promptly rebelled. San Diego joined them and once more the North and the South were arrayed against each other. Each raised an army and prepared for hostilities. Alvarado and Castro marched down the coast with a superior force and the Southerners surrendered. Then Jose Antonio Carrillo turned Warwick-kingmaker and with the assistance of President Bustamente, made not a king, but a governor, Carlos Carrillo, Jose's brother was made governor of California.

The people of Los Angeles invited Carlos to make their city the seat of his government. He accepted and was inaugurated with imposing ceremonies. Never before was the old Pueblo the scene of such festivities and rejoicing. Never before or since was it so supremely happy. Then Alvarado determined to punish the recalcitrant Sureños (Southerners). He gathered together an army of two hundred men and moved down the coast. He met the Southern army at San Buenaventura or rather he found it safely sheltered in the Old Mission building. For two days the battle raged. The walls of the old mission were mortally wounded in many places, Castenada's mustangs were captured and the Southern army was compelled to surrender. Alvarado and Castro moved down upon the Southern capital, which surrendered without opposition. Carlos Carrillo with the remnants

of his grand army, which had escaped capture, fled to San Diego, where, being reinforced, his troops, under a Gen. Tobar, of Mexico, moved northward to confront Alvarado. The armies met at Campo de Las Flores and a bloodless battle ensued. Carlos Carrillo was defeated and captured. His soldiers were sent to their homes and ordered to stay there and behave themselves. El Estado Libre—the free state—was united under one governor and Monterey was the capital.

With the overthrow of Michelorena, the last of the Mexican governors, at the battle of Cahuenga, Pio Pico became governor and Los Angeles was the capital. For twenty years the internecine strife between the North and the South had existed. Three times the territory had been rent assunder by the warring factions. For ten years Los Angeles had struggled to become the capital. It had won, but the victory was dearly bought, and it was but half a victory at best. The archives remained at Monterey. The standing army of the territory, if it could be called an army, was stationed there and there Castro, the military commandante, resided.

Castro, was accused of plotting to set up a government in the old capital in opposition to Pico. The last act in the drama of Mexican domination in California was an attempt of Pico's with his little army of Southerners to suppress Castro and the plotting politicians of Monterey. He had advanced northward as far as San Luis Obispo when a courier met him with the sad tidings, that Commodore Sloat had raised the American flag at Monterey and taken possession of California in the name of the United States. Pico and his Southern adherents retreated to Los Angeles and Castro with the fragment of his army followed after. The war of factions that for two decades past had distracted California, was ended. The feud between the arribenos and the abajenos—between the Uppers of Monterey and the Lowers of Angeles—was forgotten in the presence of an enemy that threatened their political extinction. But repentance came too late. California was lost to the sons of the soil, to the hijos del pais.

Under its new master California became the bone of contention between the North and the South. It was not the old territorial contest of Uppers and Lowers for supremacy, but a faction fight in Congress to determine which should gain the new state—the slaveholders of the South or the freemen of the North. The balance of power then was nicely adjusted,

There were fifteen slave states and fifteen free. Into whichever scale the new state was thrown the balance would be destroyed. The tidal wave of immigration that swept over California after the news of the discovery of gold spread abroad, made her a free state. When she knocked at the doors of Congress asking admission into the union of states the slave oligarchs of the South denied her request. In the Constitutional Convention of 1849 the Southern faction led by Gwin made the eastern boundary of the inchoate state the crest of the Rocky Mountains. Gwin's plan was to make the area of the state so large that Congress would refuse to admit it as one state, and would divide it into two states on the line of the Missouri Compromise 36 degrees 30 minutes. The Northern men in the convention discovered Gwin's scheme and defeated it by a reconsideration of the boundary section at the very close of the Convention. A majority of two votes changed the boundary from the crest of the Rockies to the crest of the Sierra Nevadas. After a long and bitter contest between the two factions in Congress, California was admitted into the Union as a free state, but its admission as a free state did not in the opinion of the pro slavery men of the state preclude the possibility of securing a portion of its territory for the peculiar institution of the South—slavery.

For a decade after it became a state, its division and the creation of a new state or states from its area came up in some form at nearly every session of the State Legislature. The pro slavery men in the state reasoned that if a new state could be cut off from the southern portion it could be made slave territory. Many pro slavery men had settled in that section and although slave labor might not be profitable, the accession of two pro slavery senators would help to maintain the balance of power to the South in the Senate. In the Legislature of 1854-55 Jefferson Hunt, Assemblyman from San Bernardino County, introduced a bill to create and establish out of the territory embraced within the limits of the state of California a new state to be called the State of Columbia. The territory embraced within the Counties of Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Joaquin, Calaveras, Amador, Tuolumne, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Tulare, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and San Diego with the islands on the coast was to constitute the new state.

"The people residing within the above mentioned terri-

tory shall be and they are hereby authorized so soon as the consent of the Congress of the United States shall be obtained thereto to proceed to organize a state government under such rules as are prescribed by the Constitution of the United States."

The Bill, which was Assembly Bill No. 262, was referred to a select committee of thirteen members representing different sections of the state. This committee reported as a substitute, "An Act to create three states out of the territory of California;" and also drafted an address to the people of California, advocating the passage of the bill.

The line as proposed by this section, says the committee's report, "Alters the boundary line of California on the east, so as to embrace every portion of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which borders the present state of California, which can be brought under profitable cultivation. The eastern line will run through the center of the Great American Desert."

The eastern line as stated in the section was to be the 119 degree of longitude west of Greenwich. This line passes through Nevada considerably west of the center of that State. These legislators seem to have been somewhat hazy in regard to the location of the Great American Desert.

Section 2, of the Act creates a new state to be called Colorado containing the portion of the territory now known as the counties of San Diego, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Merced, Tulare, Buena Vista and part of Mariposa. Buena Vista was a mythical country that for five or six years put in a spectral appearance in the legislative records, but never was officially created. It would have included the territory now embraced in Kern County, had it been organized. The northern boundary of the State of Colorado began at the mouth of the Pajara river, running up that river to the summit of the Coast range; thence in a straight line to the mouth of the Merced river, then up that river to the summit of the Sierra Nevadas, and thence due east to the newly established state line.

Section 3 creates a new state called Shasta. The southern boundary commences at the mouth of Maron's River; thence easterly along the boundary line between Yuba and Butte and the line between Sierra and Plumas, to the summit of the Sierra Nevada and thence to the newly established state line.

Maron's River was a mythical river. The committee found

the name on Eddy's map of California, but no one to my knowledge ever found the stream. The state of Shasta included the counties of Klamath (now Modoc), Siskiyou, Humbolt, Shasta, Trinity, Plumas and part each of the following; Butte, Colusa and Mendocino.

The territory not embraced in the states of Colorado and Shasta was to constitute the State of California.

The committee in its address to the people proceeds to show that the revenue derived from taxes and other sources would be ample to support the state governments of the proposed states. The taxable property of Shasta for the previous year, 1854, amounted to \$7,000,000, an amount less than one-third of the assessed value of the city of Pasadena. The revenue from all sources was estimated at \$100,000 a year, a sum barely sufficient to pay the present salaries of the teachers of Los Angeles City for five weeks. The taxable property of the new State of California for 1854 amounted to \$97,661,000 about one-half of the present assessed value of Los Angeles City. The yearly revenue, it was estimated, would amount to \$970,000, a sum about equal to the amount Los Angeles City now expends on its schools alone.

The value of the taxable property in the proposed State of Colorado for the year of 1854 amounted to \$9,764,000. Its total revenue from all sources was estimated at \$186,000, a sum that would pay the present expense of our police department for about three months. The committee states that in its opinion, "each of the states will be amply able to support the expense of a separate government." Evidently it did not require a large revenue to run a state government in the olden, golden days of fifty years ago.

The relative size of the three states as described is as follows, viz.: "Colorado will be the second in its dimensions in the rank of the states now in the union—California, the third and Shasta the ninth. The committee in its long address to the people of California set forth the evils experienced from our now extensive territory.

"The difficulties of intercommunication between the inhabitants of an overgrown territory are so great also, that it is next to impossible to find that unanimity of sentiment or to create that identity of interest which renders popular action consistent and efficacious. The center reaps all the benefits,

enjoys all the advantages of government favor, while the extremities are compelled to bear a large proportion of the burden of taxation. * * * "As the matter now stands, even the poor privilege of supplying officers of the state is not allowed them; the populous center outnumbering the extremities in votes controls all official patronage. California as now bounded contains 188,981 square miles; 23,315 square miles more than the area of ten states on the Atlantic seaboard. These states have twenty Senators in the United States Senate, while California has but two. Division of the state would give the Pacific Coast six (Oregon had not then become a state). After all, it was "them offices", as Nasby used to say, that was the chief incentive to state division.

The bill met with very little opposition. It passed the Assembly, but the legislative session came to an end before it reached the Senate. It was confidently predicted that it would pass both houses of the next legislature and state division would be effected; and so undoubtedly it would have been, but for one of those political cataclysms that occasionally overwhelm the schemes of politicians. California had been solidly democratic since its admission into the Union. The pro slavery wing of that party ruled in state affairs, represented the state in Congress and controlled the federal patronage of the state. If the state was divided the party's power would be increased in Congress, and would give the South six votes instead of two. At the fall election in 1855 the Know Nothing or American party carried the State, elected a governor and state officers, the legislature and the congressmen. This political cyclone swept away the hopes of the State divisionists. The question did not come up in the legislature of 1856. The bitter feud between Gwin, the leader of the pro slavery or chivalry cohorts, of the democratic party and Broderick the leader of the liberal element, still further disconcerted and delayed the schemes of the divisionists.

The Legislature of 1858-59 was strongly democratic with the chivalry wing in the ascendancy and State division again came to the front. In January, 1859, Daniel Rogers introduced a bill in the Assembly to set off the six southern counties and form a separate territorial government for them; it passed both the Assembly and the Senate and was approved by the governor April 19, 1859.

The boundaries of the proposed state were as follows: "All

that portion of the present territory of this state lying all south of a line drawn eastward from the west boundary of the state along the sixth standard parallel south of the Mount Diablo meridian east to the summit of the Coast range; thence southerly following said summit to the seventh standard parallel; thence due east on said standard, parallel to its intersection with the northwest boundary of Los Angeles County; thence northeast along said boundary to the eastern boundary of the state, including the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino and a part of Buena Vista shall be segregated from the remaining portion of the state for the purpose of the formation by Congress with the concurrent action of said portion (the consent for the segregation of which is hereby granted) of a territorial or other government under the name of the 'Territory of Colorado' or such name as may be deemed meet and proper."

Section 2, provided for the submitting of the question of "For a Territory or against a Territory" to the vote of the people living in the portion sought to be segregated at the next general election; and in case two-thirds of the whole number of voters voting thereon shall vote for a change of government, the consent hereby given shall be deemed consummated. In case the vote was favorable the Secretary of State was to send a certified copy of the result of the election and a copy of the act to the President of the United States and to the senators and representatives in Congress.

In the list of counties to be segregated again appears the county of Buena Vista. For five years this county had haunted the legislators and yet it had no official existence. The territory that would have been included in it was still part of Tulare. Later it became part of Kern county, when that county was created. At the general election in September, 1859, the question of dismemberment of the State was submitted to a vote of the people of the southern counties, with the following result:

Los Angeles Co.....	For, 1,407	Against, 441
San Bernardino Co.....	For, 441	Against, 29
San Luis Obispo Co.....	For, 10	Against, 283
San Diego.....	For, 207	Against, 24
Santa Barbara.....	For, 395	Against, 51
Tulare	For, 17	Against, 0

Total for, 2,477; against 828. The returns of the election showed considerably more than two-thirds in favor of a new

state. The results of the vote and the act were sent to the president and congress. And although Milton Latham a northern man with southern principles and a pronounced divisionist represented California in the U. S. Senate, no notice seems to have been taken of the request of the inchoate state of Colorado. The Southern senators and congressmen were preparing for secession. A sparsely settled state on the Pacific coast, 2,000 miles away from the prospective Confederacy was not worth considering, nad the secessionists of Southern California were left to work out their scheme alone.

The question of division slumbered for twenty years. In 1881 an effort was made to resurrect the scheme. Feb. 1, 1881 a citizens' mass meeting was held in Los Angeles to discuss the subject of how to improve Wilmington harbor and incidentally the question of State division. A committee was appointed to take the question under advisement. This committee selected a legal committee of nine attorneys to which was submitted the questions whether the Act of 1859 was still in force and if so what steps were necessary to complete the division and establish the new state of Southern California. The legal committee decided the Act of 1859 was still in force and it only remained for Congress to admit the new state. A mass convention was called to meet in Los Angeles, Sept. 8, 1881, to take futher action in the matter. The convention met, but there was not a very large mass of it. Los Angeles County was in evidence, but the other counties of the prospective State of Southern California were not largely represented. Los Angeles City wanted to be the capital of the new state, wanted to monopolize the offices, wanted to be "it." The other counties were not enthusiastic. They could not see clearly how they were to be benefitted; so the question of division fell into a state of innocuous desuetude.

In 1888 Gen. Vandever of Ventura Co., member of Congress from the sixth California district, introduced a bill to divide the state and create the State of Southern California. The bill is still slumbering on the files. There let it sleep. Nearly two decades have passed since the last attempt was made to divide the state. The necessity for division if it ever existed exists no longer. The south, with its rapid increase in population and wealth, will soon hold the balance of power or if not, it will be able to hold its own with the north. Its astute politicians will always see to it that it gets its full share of "them offices."

While the men who in the past championed dismemberment

of the state were no doubt sincere in their belief that such action would be beneficial to the people of the various sections, we should be thankful that their schemes failed—that our magnificent state escaped division.